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INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

THE USSR SEES A CRISIS IN US CIVIL DEFENSE

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE
Office of Research and Reports

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THE USSR SEES A CRISIS IN US CIVIL DEFENSE

In the Soviet book Yadernyy vek i voyna (The Nuclear Age and War), edited by Marshal A. A. Grechko and published this year, there appears an article on civil defense written by Colonel General O. V. Tolstikov, a well-known Soviet civil defense spokesman. Tolstikov discusses US civil defense as well as civil defense in general. He also makes a few generalized statements on civil defense in the USSR. The discussion of civil defense in the US again demonstrates that the USSR collects civil defense information and follows developments here with some interest. Tolstikov concludes that civil defense in the US is in serious difficulty -- that it serves military rather than humane purposes and that it lacks public support and effective organization -- and he implies that if it were tested, it would fail to protect more than a very small fraction of the population.

The thrust of the article by Tolstikov is concerned with the necessity for widespread organizing and equipping of civil defense units that now "require millions of trained persons in large states." In spite of what he alleges to be widespread "militaristic" and civil defense publicity in the US, he believes that the US cannot organize an effective civil defense for several reasons. One reason that Tolstikov gives is that the US public has been intimidated by nuclear war -- "civil defense formations cannot be manned by persons who have hidden in their family shelters." Second, he claims that the public realizes that US civil defense serves to protect and restore monopoly industry and that there is no unity of interest between the "working masses" and the nation.

Tolstikov begins his article by noting the "colossal destruction which would occur in rear areas in case of nuclear war -- with the death of millions." To substantiate this, he quotes from the Saturday Evening Post and Dr. Linus Pauling to the effect that 173 million or 185 million Americans would die in nuclear war.

As evidence of disjointedness and failure in the US program, Tolstikov cites the inability of the government to enroll large numbers of the population in civil defense. He attributes to the American press the revelation -- after the Cuban crisis -- that "civil defense in many cities and populated points in the US had neither plans, shelters, nor administrative organs." The failure of citizens to build private shelters also was mentioned. Cities and even states are "leaving the game." One state so identified is Oregon, and the failure of Senator Morse to intercede for civil defense is mentioned specifically.

In regard to shelters, Tolstikov states, "Not one modern state, including the US, has as its disposal the material and financial capabilities to construct antiautomatic [that is, blast-resistant, filter-ventilated] shelters for the entire population." He takes note of the US fallout shelter program, stating that "covers" for 70 million persons were to be prepared by 1967 in the US according to a program of 1961-62. With some satisfaction, Tolstikov reports the "episode of the bunkers," when efforts to manufacture and sell private shelters resulted in piles of unused shelters in US cities. The Americans who actually built shelters he identified as those with "weak nerves" or the "fearful well-to-do."

One purpose of US civil defense is deduced as strategic support for "aggressive, piratical" US policies. Evidence of a militarizing trend is seen in the transfer of civil defense responsibility to the "Pentagon." A second goal is identified as the defense and restoration of US industrial targets that belong to the "monopolists." These deduced rather than announced goals, of course, have propagandistic overtones that are contrasted with the stated aims of Soviet civil defense -- "protecting the peaceful population."

Tolstikov finds fear, a lack of purpose and of public support, a shelter program that is a "bluff," and a "paper" organization creating a "deep crisis" in US civil defense, which is unable to insure national survival in a modern war.

In his concluding paragraphs, Tolstikov claims that only the USSR and the countries of the socialist alliance have a reliable, humanely oriented civil defense, the national formations of which are "constantly on the alert." Inconsistent in places, the article has a propaganda content that may have been included for foreign as well as for domestic consumption.

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